United Nations A/67/313

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
Item 20 (b) the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 65/155, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the status of the implementation of that resolution, and to include a section in his report on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations. A report of the Association of Caribbean States on progress made in implementation of this resolution is contained in the annex to the present report.

* A/67/150.

12-46507 (E) 170912

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels	3
	A. Marine pollution	3
	B. Coastal and marine resource management	5
	C. Sustainable economic and social development	6
	D. Climate change and disaster preparedness	7
	E. Capacity-building and access to information	9
III.	Activities of the Caribbean Sea Commission	10
IV.	Possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development	11
V.	Conclusion	11
Annex		
	Report of the Association of Caribbean States on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/155, entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations"	13

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 65/155 of 19 December 2010, entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", the General Assembly called on the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection and sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea, and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the status of the implementation of that resolution, and to include a section in his report on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations.

2. The present report is based on inputs from the United Nations system, relevant regional organizations, and Member States.[1] Pursuant to the invitation extended by the General Assembly, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has submitted a report on its progress in implementing the above-mentioned resolution, which is contained in the annex to this report.

II. Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels

A. Marine pollution

3. Following the establishment of adequate port waste reception facilities by most countries in the region, the Special Area designation for the Caribbean, under Annex V to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto, entered into force in May 2011, prohibiting disposal of all garbage into the sea.

4. The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region entered into force in August 2010, following the accession of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas and Guyana. It has since also been ratified by Dominica and Grenada, and is expected to be ratified by Jamaica.

5. As a Co-Chair of the White Water to Blue Water Partnership Initiative, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) continues to develop partnerships that enhance integrated approaches in areas such as waste water and sanitation, sustainable agricultural

[1] Inputs were received from the following organizations: the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Tourism Organization and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; and from the following Member States: Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico.

practices, integrated coastal management, sustainable tourism and environmentally sound marine transport in the wider Caribbean region.

6. The improvement of waste-water management capacity in countries of the wider Caribbean region has been supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW) project, of which UNEP CEP is the regional implementing agency. The final project, approved in 2010, will benefit 13 participating countries through sustainable financing for projects and by addressing key capacity constraints within existing legal, institutional, educational and policy frameworks.

7. Efforts to mitigate pollution caused by ballast water exchange continue to be supported by UNEP CEP, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean (RAC/REMPEITC). Following the development of a draft regional strategy for ballast water management, a Regional Training Workshop on the Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement of the Ballast Water Management Convention was held in Jamaica on 14 and 15 November 2011.

8. Oil pollution response efforts have included the creation of a Regional Caribbean Island Oil Pollution Response and Cooperation (OPRC) Plan, led by RAC-REMPEITC Caribe, the development of a geographic information system (GIS)-based database of the Maritime Traffic in the Wider Caribbean Region, and the development of environmental sensitivity index (ESI) maps, which will facilitate the risk assessment and planning process during an oil spill response. Additionally, the Government of Mexico convened a meeting in November 2011 with the aim of strengthening regional cooperation and exchanging information on the management of industrial security and environmental protection in the oil industry operating in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

9. With the primary goal of assisting in the environmental protection and sustainable development of the wider Caribbean region, as related to the prevention and reduction of marine litter, UNEP Regional Seas and partners developed a Regional Action Plan on the Sustainable Management of Marine Litter, which was piloted in three countries (Barbados, Guyana and Saint Lucia).

10. Two GEF projects addressing watershed management came to a close in the last biennium. The project entitled "Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) in the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean" has supported legislative and policy reform at the island States level and capacity-building to implement those reforms. Demonstration projects completed in eight small island developing States showed how the reduction of contaminants can address water scarcity and also improve the quality of the marine environment and coastal resources. A follow-up project to GEF IWCAM, entitled "Implementing Integrated Land, Water and Wastewater Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States" was endorsed and submitted for consideration by the GEF Secretariat in April 2012.

11. It is proposed that the project entitled "Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea" (REPCar), implemented in Costa Rica, Colombia and Nicaragua to protect the Caribbean marine environment by reducing pesticide run-off in the agricultural sector, be succeeded by the project entitled "Improved management of agrochemical life cycles in the Caribbean and Central American regions", which

aims to be more multisectoral in nature and to include international waters and persistent organic pollutants.

B. Coastal and marine resource management

12. Recognizing the role that marine protected areas play in conserving biodiversity, enhancing fisheries and achieving other management goals, UNEP CEP continued to take the lead in the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management (CaMPAM) Network and Forum partnership to strengthen capacity for marine protected area management in the wider Caribbean. The Caribbean Environment Programme has also supported the Caribbean Challenge Initiative through regional activities that include marine protected area networking and capacity-building. In support of improved governance of the shared living marine resources of the wider Caribbean, CEP is currently implementing a pilot project on the management and conservation of reef biodiversity and reef fisheries using an ecosystem-based approach, as part of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project.

13. The threat of alien and invasive species (such as the lionfish) to biodiversity in the region is being addressed through the regional GEF project on Invasive Species in the Insular Caribbean implemented by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI).

14. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been fostering the implementation of ecosystem approaches to fisheries, including through the development of a toolbox thereon in collaboration with the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and the University of the West Indies. A case study of the shared stocks of the shrimp and groundfish fishery of the Guianas-Brazil shelf was undertaken as part of the GEF-CLME Project, with the aim of mainstreaming ecosystem approaches to fisheries into the management of the shrimp and groundfish resources of this area.

15. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) adopted a resolution on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments at its fourteenth session, held in Panama City from 6 to 9 February 2012. The Commission also established a Working Group on Recreational Fisheries, which aims to assess their socioeconomic impact and importance.

16. The work of the CEP SPAW subprogramme includes conservation activities for wider Caribbean region-threatened and -endangered species, as listed in the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol). National sea turtle recovery action plans were completed for Panama and Grenada, a regional management plan for the conservation of marine mammals in the wider Caribbean region was adopted, and the regional manatee management plan was updated. Regional efforts towards sustainable management of queen conch and spiny lobster were supported, in particular in the area of capacity-building in collaboration with FAO/Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission.

17. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has provided technical and financial support to the Caribbean countries for the integrated water management of river basin and coastal resources, as well as for the ecosystem-based management of transboundary living marine resources in the Caribbean large marine ecosystem. Through a four-year project in Antigua and Barbuda, UNDP aims to

develop a sustainable island resource management (SIRM) approach, one that perceives the whole island ecosystem and its marine and terrestrial resources as a capital asset that, with proper management and protection, will continue to yield a flow of vital goods and services necessary for sustainable economic development.

18. The project entitled "Sustainable Management of the shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Adjacent Regions" (2009-2013) is contributing to improving the governance and management of shared living marine resources in the wider Caribbean region through an ecosystem-based approach. Three priority transboundary problems have been identified: unsustainable exploitation of fish and other living resources, habitat degradation and community modification, and pollution. A strategic action programme (SAP) is being developed and will aim at mobilizing resources for the strengthening of the overarching governance framework for the Caribbean large marine ecosystem and adjacent areas.

19. At the national level, Colombia launched a project on biodiversity protection in the south-west region of the Caribbean in 2010, aimed at protecting, preserving and sustainably using important ecosystems and marine and coastal biodiversity of the south-western Caribbean Sea. Costa Rica developed a national strategy for the integrated management of marine and coastal resources, which identifies three critical issues requiring immediate action: management of marine and coastal resources, maritime safety and spatial planning.

20. In response to requests from Caribbean countries, Australia hosted a workshop to help better manage coral reefs and respond to climate change impacts such as coral reef bleaching and loss of biodiversity. Building on this, Australia's partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is supporting further coral reef management activities designed to promote sustainable marine environments.

C. Sustainable economic and social development

21. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, which sets out comprehensive rights and protection for seafarers while also providing a level playing field for shipowners, has, to date, been ratified by Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

22. The ILO Programme on Occupational Safety and Health and the Environment in the Caribbean (OSHE) was launched in February 2011, with the aim of supporting Governments and employers' and workers' organizations in the Caribbean in their efforts to improve occupational safety and health and contribute to environmental sustainability, including in such crucial economic sectors as the hotel, tourism and cruise ships industries.

23. ILO promotes creation of green jobs as a strategy for minimizing the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors. The creation of green jobs and decent work is one of four priorities in the decent work country programme for Guyana, which was signed off on in April 2012. Guyana has also been implementing a low-carbon development strategy, launched in 2009, with the aim of fostering economic growth, and sustaining development through the adoption of a low-carbon development path.

24. The World Tourism Organization sustainable tourism for eliminating poverty (ST-EP) initiative focuses on developing and promoting sustainable forms of tourism with activities specifically aimed at alleviating poverty, including focusing on training of local guides and hotel employees, facilitating the involvement of local people in tourism development around natural and cultural heritage sites, establishing business linkages between poor producers and tourism enterprises, and providing business and financial services to small, medium-sized and community-based tourism enterprises. In Honduras, a project was carried out to establish linkages between the Garifuna communities and small businesses near la Bahía de Tela.

25. The World Tourism Organization is participating in the Cultural Recovery and Creative Productive Development on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, a joint programme that aims to help reduce inequality in the human, social and economic development of indigenous and Afro-descendant villages on the Caribbean coast through cultural reclamation, productive development and the furthering of traditional knowledge.

D. Climate change and disaster preparedness

26. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) continues to serve as the focal point for climate change issues in the Caribbean, providing clearing-house and capacity-building services, implementing projects and supporting joint programmes in the region. CCCCC, together with the University of the West Indies and the Cuban Institute of Meteorology (INSMET), has completed work on climate modelling, especially in projecting temperature and precipitation changes, and is now working on projecting changes in sea level. CCCCC has also prepared an Implementation Plan for the Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change, as mandated by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government. The plan defines the region's strategic approach for coping with climate change for the period 2011-2021.

27. UNEP implemented a pilot Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Methodology Development Project (RiVAMP), which was conceived with the objective of developing an assessment tool that takes into account ecosystems and climate change in the analysis of disaster risk and vulnerability. It specifically targets small island developing States and other coastal areas that are highly vulnerable and exposed to tropical cyclones and related hazards.

28. The project, entitled "Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Jamaica", funded by the European Union (EU) and co-managed by UNEP CEP and the Planning Institute of Jamaica, seeks to increase resilience and reduce risks associated with natural hazards in vulnerable areas as constituting adaptive measures to climate change, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Jamaica.

29. With the project "My Island — My Community: Increasing Awareness and Changing Attitudes and Behaviours on Climate Change and Environment in Tobago", UNDP aims to increase environmental awareness on climate change in Tobago, focusing on community participation and a bottom-up approach to conservation, improved watershed management and more controlled use of resources.

30. In Guyana, UNDP interventions at the policy level have resulted in the setting up of a national multi-stakeholder Disaster Risk Reduction Coordination Platform; the preparation of a disaster risk management policy and a multi-hazard response plan; and the establishment of a fully equipped Emergency Operation Centre. Vulnerability studies were conducted in health, human settlements and agriculture, including scenarios of future impacts of climate change.

31. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continues to support its Caribbean member States, in coordination with regional organizations like the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), towards the establishment of a full-fledged Caribbean tsunami and sea-level-related hazards warning and mitigation system. The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions has met annually since 2006. Significant improvement has been achieved in terms of sea-level monitoring coverage with support of the University of Hawaii Sea Level Center, the Puerto Rico Seismic Network and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

32. The World Tourism Organization has conducted a series of national and regional workshops to assist its member States in assessing and mitigating risks related to tourism, which include developing, planning and implementing crisis management systems that will reduce the impact of, and assist in recovery from, crises. The World Tourism Organization is also a key partner in the CARIBSAVE project, which addresses the impacts and challenges surrounding climate change, tourism, the environment, economic development and community livelihoods across the Caribbean Basin.

33. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) conducted economic assessments to 2050 of the impact of climate change on key vulnerable sectors of several Caribbean countries, including an analysis of the coastal and marine sector in the British Virgin Islands and Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the coastal and human settlements sector in Barbados and Guyana. These assessments provided quantitative information on the costs of climate change to these economies and of the various adaptation and mitigation options recommended.

34. Colombia has undertaken a national pilot project for adaptation to climate change, the marine component of which addresses adaptation measures in the insular areas, specifically to changes in precipitation, temperature and sea-level rise.

35. Australia established formal relations with CARICOM in 2009 and is investing $A 60 million in development assistance to help Caribbean countries reduce vulnerability to climate change, natural disasters and economic challenges. Of the $A 17.5 million committed to climate change and disaster risk reduction programmes, most of the support goes to key regional organizations, which are helping nations and communities across the Caribbean to reduce the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

E. Capacity-building and access to information

36. IMO has developed a geographic information system (GIS)-based database on maritime traffic in the wider Caribbean with the aim of increasing access to information; improving maritime environment protection; analysing maritime traffic; enhancing government-industry partnership and cooperation; and increasing implementation of IMO and relevant regional instruments. IMO also held a series of national and regional workshops in 2011 on: the development of an environmental sensitivity index and associated GIS maps; compliance, monitoring and enforcement of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments; and the implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation.

37. UNEP CEP continues to work in the wider Caribbean region to assist countries in respect of their becoming parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) and the three protocols thereto, meeting the objectives set out therein, and facilitating their implementation through awareness-raising, capacity-building, data collection and ease of access to information. CEP is also the regional executing agency for the GEF International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network project, which aims to enhance communications and information-sharing among GEF projects.

38. Progress has been made on an assessment of pollutant loads and sources in the wider Caribbean region facilitated by the LBS RAC Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays (CIMAB), providing additional data and information regarding discharges into, or impacting, the wider Caribbean region and establishing a baseline from which to measure progress under the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention.

39. In order to enhance the capacity of the countries of the wider Caribbean region to implement the LBS Protocol and to improve knowledge on the status and quality of the marine environment and its resources, a partnership known as the Regional Network in Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean: The Know-Why Network was developed. The partnership project enabled capacity-building of regional activity centres for the LBS Protocol and partner regional laboratories through the provision of materials and training, development of pollutant indicators and methodologies for monitoring and analysis, and capacity-building to facilitate the increased use of GIS.

40. Ongoing discussions have focused on effective regional coordination of information between partners of the Know-Why Network and GEF-sponsored initiatives (the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management and Reducing Pesticide Run-off to the Caribbean Sea projects). Existing and proposed information systems for developing a pollution information node and a database on the state of the marine environment of the wider Caribbean region are under evaluation. One platform for data dissemination already established is a web-based interactive project activity map (IPAM) created in collaboration with the Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC). A similar map is planned for regional shi, ,ing data obtained by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean.

41. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre project entitled "Database management system for regional integrated observing network for environmental change in the wider Caribbean (DBS)", launched in 2011, aims to build regional capacity to respond to the challenges and adverse impact of climate change by facilitating open access to data products useful for observing environmental change in the wider Caribbean through support of a regional observing network.

42. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Secretariat has instituted a Sustainable Oceans Governance (SOG) programme with the overall objective of promoting regional economic development through the sustainable management of the use of ocean resources and the protection of the marine environment. The OECS SOG programme aims to build capacity at the level of the Secretariat and member States to develop clear overarching national policies on ocean governance and strengthen the legal and administrative frameworks in support of such policies.

43. UNDP has focused on strengthening the implementation of environmental impact assessments, as well as contributing to the implementation of strategic environmental assessments, through the development and application of natural resource valuation tools, including through a pilot project in Jamaica.

44. UNESCO continues to support the consolidation and expansion of the Sandwatch educational programme in the Caribbean, involving students, teachers and community members. A global Sandwatch database is currently under development, allowing practitioners to share data from their projects online.

III. Activities of the Caribbean Sea Commission

45. Since its establishment in 2006, with the purpose of promoting a coordinated governance of the wider Caribbean region and spearheading the initiative to designate the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, the Caribbean Sea Commission has been seeking full institutionalization in order to implement its proposed plan of action. During the past two years, efforts have continued to focus on raising awareness of the potential role of the Caribbean Sea Commission in regional ocean governance aimed at engaging countries of the wider Caribbean region and garnering financial support from donors outside the region. While some support has been shown, both political and financial, it has not yet been enough for the Commission to establish its Secretariat and to begin its substantive work. During the next biennium, efforts will continue to focus on promoting the Commission and securing funding for its operationalization.

46. As elaborated in the report of the Association of Caribbean States (see annex), the Commission counts as one of its key roles the formation of a collaborative technical and policy network of all countries and organizations working towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea with the objective of sharing experiences and coordinating initiatives via a functional region-wide science-policy interface. Steps were taken towards the establishment of such an interface in 2011 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Association of Caribbean States and the University of the West Indies, followed by the establishment of the University's Ocean Governance Network to facilitate the memorandum of understanding. This interdisciplinary Network is fully operational,

providing an interface between the Caribbean Sea Commission and the expertise available across the University.

IV. Possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development

47. The concept of the Caribbean Sea às a "special area in the context of sustainable development" and the definition of the legal implications thereof are expected to be taken up by the Legal Subcommission of the Caribbean Sea Commission once the Secretariat is established, taking into consideration the specific meaning ascribed to "special areas" in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.[2]

48. As detailed in the annexed Association of Caribbean States report, the financial implications for the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission must be viewed as having two components: (a) operationalization of the Secretariat and (b) strengthening the capacity of Association of Caribbean States member States and regional organizations to implement coastal and ocean governance decisions. However, since the role of the Commission lies in coordination and integration, rather than in implementation, the costs associated with the second component are not directly related to the funding requirements of the Commission.

49. In considering the financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area, it is important to account for the value of coastal and ocean resources of the wider Caribbean region in terms both of their use value and of their non-use value. Currently, most valuation work has been directed at coral reefs, in relation to the benefits of marine protected areas, but little effort has been expended on the issue of the value of coral reefs as coastal defence or the valuation of other ecosystems (continental shelf, pelagic).

V. Conclusion

50. **The protection of the Caribbean Sea and the sustainable management of its resources continue to be a priority for the countries of the wider Caribbean region and for the greater international community. The last biennium has seen significant positive developments, particularly with regard to the entry into force of international agreements on ship-generated waste and pollution from land-based sources and activities. Regional organizations have continued to work together, aided by a number of new information management and information technology initiatives that facilitate knowledge-sharing.**

51. **The Association of Caribbean States continues to promote the Caribbean Sea Commission as a coordinating body for ocean governance in the wider**

[2] See General Assembly resolution 65/37 on oceans and the law of the sea. The previous report (A/65/301) covers in greater detail the potential legal implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area vis-à-vis the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

Caribbean region and to seek its operationalization. The international community has recognized the importance of a coordinated approach to the sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea and has demonstrated its support for the proposed work of the Commission. In order to pursue its programme of work, the Commission needs the financial support of the international community to allow for the establishment of a Secretariat. Once the Caribbean Sea Commission ac ,uirs the necessary funding to begin its substantive activities, the initiative to designate the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development can be further explored, and the associated legal and financial implications can be detailed.

Annex

Report of the Association of Caribbean States on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/155, entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations"

Introduction

1. The wider Caribbean is the most geopolitically complex and diverse region in the world. In light of this and the large numbers of countries and organizations that are involved in sustainable development at multiple geographical and institutional-scale levels, it is not possible to assemble complete information on all that is being done within the region to ensure the sustainable management and development of the Caribbean Sea. The current governance structure features the maintenance of extensive inventories of projects and information. A network structure that promotes interaction among countries and partner organizations and facilitates access to their information and expertise is seen as a more effective and efficient means of collaboration than an approach that attempts to maintain extensive inventories of projects, expertise and information. The Caribbean Sea Commission provides this solution.

2. One of the key roles of the Caribbean Sea Commission is to establish and maintain a technical and policy-oriented network of all Association of Caribbean States (ACS) countries and organizations mandated to conduct work in any way related to the Caribbean Sea. The network would address the critical issues facing the region's marine systems. In this way, the Commission can serve as a body for coordination and exchange of experiences among States regarding their policies in the Caribbean, and to strengthen existing mechanisms by promoting synergies and inter-institutional cooperation while respecting each organization's mandate.

3. The partnership or networking approach described above that has been adopted as the mode of operation of the Caribbean Sea Commission will require support at the country level as well as from the full range of regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that make up the network. Ultimately, the Commission is not intended to be a body for implementation of technical projects. Local, national and regional partners are currently well placed to fulfil this role. Rather, the Commission is seen as a mechanism with which to build and enhance a network among partners, with a view to establishing a functional region-wide science-policy interface.

4. In April 2011, the Association of Caribbean States and the University of the West Indies accomplished this. The two institutions signed a memorandum of understanding in support of the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission. This was followed in October 2011 by the establishment by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI) of the University's Ocean Governance Network to facilitate the memorandum of understanding. The Network provides an interface between the expertise available on all four campuses of the University and the Commission. The network has many members from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and is fully operational.

5. The present report covers the activities of the Association of Caribbean States and its Caribbean Sea Commission in respect of actions highlighted in General Assembly resolution 65/155 entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", adopted on 20 December 2010, as well as the issues set out in paragraphs 6 and 17 thereof.

6. The report specifically provides updates on the issues covered in paragraphs 3, 4, 8-11, 14, 16 and 17 of resolution 65/155. Activities dealt with are:

- Institutionalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission
- International support for the Commission
- Progress with international agreements
- Fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation
- Disaster preparedness
- Human capacity
- Legal implications

Institutionalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission and its Subcommission

7. In the past two years, there has been slow but steady progress in respect of institutionalizing the Caribbean Sea Commission as a key mechanism for ocean governance and sustainable development of the wider Caribbean region and for achieving the goals of the Caribbean Sea Initiative. Much of the effort that has been invested has been directed towards increasing awareness both within the wider Caribbean region and outside of it, regarding the potential role of the Commission in regional ocean governance. Within the wider Caribbean, this has been aimed mainly at engaging countries and partner organizations and achieving support for the Commission. Outside of the wider Caribbean, the focus has been on obtaining financial support. While some support has been forthcoming (see below), it has not been sufficient to effect the establishment of the Secretariat and the commencement of the substantive work of the Commission.

8. Throughout the biennium, the purpose and plans for the Caribbean Sea Commission have been shared in a variety of forums, including:

- United Nations University-Fisheries Training Programme for the Caribbean/ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism/University of the West Indies (UWI) Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) stock assessment course for CARICOM fisheries officers, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, 23 August-3 September 2010
- Sixty-third Annual Conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1-5 November 2010
- Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism multidisciplinary workshop on the common fisheries policy, Georgetown, Guyana, 12-14 April 2011
- Thirty-fifth Scientific Conference of the Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean, San José, Costa Rica, 23-27 May 2011
- Sixth Global Environment Facility, Biennial International Waters Conference, Dubrovnik, 17-21 October 2011

- Inter-American Seas Research Consortium Kick-Off Symposium, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 8 December 2011
- FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), fourteenth session, Panama City, 6-9 February 2012
- OECS Workshop on Ocean Governance, Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia, 8 and 9 February 2012
- Conference on Sustainable Use of Oceans in the Context of the Green Economy and Poverty Eradication, Monaco, 28-30 November 2011
- Ocean Sciences Meeting 2012, Salt Lake City, Utah, 20-24 February 2012
- Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge towards Solutions conference, London, 26-29 March 2012

Some of these interactions were initiated by the organization convening the meeting and reflect a growing awareness of the Caribbean Sea Commission in the region and the desire to develop partnerships with it.

9. The Caribbean Sea Commission and the Caribbean Sea Initiative were also promoted within CARICOM in two ministerial-level forums, namely, the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations, and the thirty-seventh special meeting of the Council for Trade and Development; and, at the level of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government, at their thirty-second regular meeting.

10. The Caribbean Sea Commission will hold a mini-symposium in 2012 for the purpose of better informing countries and international organizations about the Caribbean Sea Commission and gaining their support for its work.

11. These efforts to increase awareness of the role of the Caribbean Sea Commission were supported by the preparation, in partnership with the University of the West Indies, of a policy perspective document entitled "The emerging ocean governance regime in the wider Caribbean region", published in November 2011.

12. There were no meetings of the Caribbean Sea Commission and its bodies during the biennium. The twelfth meeting of the Commission is scheduled to be convened in 2012.

13. The approach to operationalizing the Caribbean Sea Commission continues to be envisaged as being initiated through a first phase with a duration of four years and with a focus on living marine resources of the wider Caribbean region, including their linkages with productive sectors such as fisheries and tourism, and with reference to the threats posed by climate change. The base amount of funding being sought from the international community to implement this start-up over a four-year period is US$ 1.5 million. However, despite the modest sum being sought, and the conservative approach being taken for this initial period, funds have not been available and it has not yet been possible to establish the Secretariat required in order to coordinate the proposed activities of the Commission.

14. Efforts to promote the Caribbean Sea Commission and acquire funding will continue in the next biennium.

15. The emphasis on ocean governance and marine resources at the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 are expected

to heighten awareness of the need for urgent action regarding ocean governance at the regional and global levels. It is anticipated that this heightening of awareness and the gathering momentum of the United Nations regular process for the oceans will facilitate the acquisition of the funds needed for the Caribbean Sea Commission.

International support for the Caribbean Sea Commission (paras. 4 and 12 of General Assembly resolution 65/155)

16. Association of Caribbean States observer members, Turkey and the Republic of Korea have provided significant financial support for the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission in the past biennium. Turkey contributed some US$ 99,990.00 to the Commission, while the Republic of Korea has made US$ 75,725.50 available to the Commission. Both these pledges have supported the operation of the Commission and have proved indispensable to its activities with regard to various projects and missions.

17. The inclusion of the Caribbean Sea in the joint Caribbean-European Union Strategy which has yet to be adopted by the European Union is an indication of growing recognition of the significance of marine issues in the wider Caribbean region.

18. At the twenty-sixth meeting of the CARICOM Council of Ministers held in Montego Bay, Jamaica on 3 July 2010, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC affirmed that organization's willingness to give favourable consideration to the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area.

Progress with relevant international agreements (paras. 8 and 11)

19. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) promotes the adoption of some 15 conventions and protocols that deal with pollution prevention and marine management.

20. On 1 May 2011, the discharge requirements for the Wider Caribbean Region Special Area, under Annex V to the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, entitled "Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships", took effect. This Area, which includes the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, had been designated as a Special Area under Annex V to the Convention in July 1991. Most countries in the region have given notice that adequate reception facilities are provided in most relevant ports, so that Special Area status can now be made effective. Under regulation 5 of Annex V, on disposal of garbage within special areas, disposal of all garbage into the sea, including plastics, is prohibited.

21. In the past biennium, IMO undertook several activities in the wider Caribbean which support the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/155, namely:

- Development of a geographic information system (GIS)-based database on maritime traffic in the wider Caribbean
- Sponsoring of participants from eight countries so as to enable them to attend the 2011 International Oil Spill Conference
- A regional workshop on the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships

- Training on monitoring and enforcement of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments
- A regional workshop on the implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation

22. The activities of the UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme have also been highly supportive of General Assembly resolution 65/155. These are carried out under the Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols. All but three States (Haiti, Honduras and Suriname) have become contracting parties to the Association of Caribbean States Cartagena Convention and the Protocol thereto Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region. The Bahamas is now the sixteenth State in the wider Caribbean region to become a party to the Protocol thereto Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region. Thus, of the now 16 signatories, 15 are ACS members or associate members. The Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities came into force on 13 August 2010. Two countries have become contracting parties in the past biennium, making a total of nine.

23. No other Association of Caribbean States country has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in this biennium, leaving a total of 22 ratifications. Similarly, there were no further ratifications of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks ("the Fish Stocks Agreement")[a] in the last biennium, leaving the Association of Caribbean States total at seven ratifications.

Programmes to promote fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation (paras. 9, 10 and 12)

24. As previously indicated, Association of Caribbean States countries as well as organizations within the region conduct a large number of activities, many of which are at the local and national level, aimed at addressing biodiversity loss in coastal and marine ecosystems. While some of these are focused specifically on marine biodiversity, most take a broader approach to sustainability and include aspects of livelihood and governance. A complete inventory of these is not feasible in the confines of this report, but there are some notable regional efforts that are linked to the Caribbean Sea Commission that can be highlighted.

25. The work of the UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme, based at the Regional Coordinating Unit in Jamaica, continues to be central to progress with respect to the sustainable use of the marine resources of the wider Caribbean region. Through its responsibility for oversight of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, the Regional Coordinating Unit plays a wide-ranging and critical role in biodiversity conservation, establishment of coastal and marine protected areas, and reduction in marine pollution from land-based and marine sources.

26. Other regional organizations responsible for the sustainable use of living marine resources, such as the CARICOM Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), el Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA) and the

[a] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2167, No. 37924.

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU), continue to strengthen and move towards fuller adoption and implementation of an ecosystem-based approach as a World Summit on Sustainable Development target. On 28 July 2010, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Ministerial Council approved the Castries (Saint Lucia) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable fisheries. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism has made progress towards finalizing its common fisheries policy, which is to be transmitted to the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at its thirty-third regular meeting in July 2012 where it will be considered for final adoption. OSPESCA has continued to promote integrated transboundary governance in the Central American region and has made good progress with respect to lobster and shark management issues, among other marine ecosystem issues. In February 2012, OECS held a consultation on ocean governance as part of its Sustainable Oceans Governance programme, aimed at moving its member States towards integrated ocean governance at a transboundary level.

27. The Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Adjacent Regions project (2009-2013) (funded by GEF and implemented by the UNESCO/IOC Subcommission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions and UNDP), which involves 26 countries, focuses on transboundary living marine resource governance in the region. This project has a suite of project components that are focused on improved ocean governance. Three of these components relate directly to supporting the Caribbean Sea Initiative and the Caribbean Sea Commission. They include: developing a regional monitoring and reporting process for the oceans and the active development of a science-policy interface for the Caribbean Sea and adjacent areas, both of which recognize the Commission as a key regional policy body for marine affairs. The CLME project has continued to interface with the Caribbean Sea Commission to promote more effective and sustainable ocean governance.

28. The European Union-funded Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment (FORCE) project (2010-2014) (approximately €10 million) is another substantial regional activity that has also been designed to encompass the recognition that the Commission is a key regional policy body for marine affairs. This project continued in the past biennium and involves 14 European and 7 regional partners. FORCE aims to assess coral reefs at a regional level and to provide policy and management advice to countries and regional organizations. Its structure is such that its policy advice will be developed in the context of the Commission and other regional organizations.

29. Ecosystem-based management is fundamental to both the sustainable use of marine resources and marine biodiversity conservation in the wider Caribbean region. Significant progress towards marine ecosystem-based management by 2010 was a target of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The ecosystem-based approach adopted by the CLME project is now supported by ecosystem-specific transboundary diagnostic analyses for fisheries-related issues. Ecosystem-based management principles have been incorporated into the common fisheries policy that is being developed for CARICOM countries by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and already underlie the programmes and plans of OSPESCA.

30. The Moored fish AGgregating DEvice in the LESser Antilles (MAGDELESA) programme has been co-financed by France and the European Union and aims to develop, together with the scientific teams and fisheries managers of the Lesser Antilles and Haiti, an integrated and participative approach to the sustainable and responsible development of the blooming practice of fishing in the zone utilizing fish aggregating devices. To date, action has been taken towards spreading systems focused on fishing and on inventories of species from Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Martinique.

31. In the area of protected marine environment support programmes, the Fund for the Global Environment (France) has participated in two projects. The first is the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) project. This is geared towards the conservation of biodiversity of global importance to the participating OECS countries by removing barriers to effective management of protected areas, and increasing the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the planning, management and sustainable use of these areas. The second project involves work with UNDP on the marine protected area network in Cuba.

32. The Dominican Republic, in association with Cuba, Jamaica (as observer), Haiti and France and the Environment Directorate of Martinique and Guadeloupe, has promoted the Caribbean Biological Corridor project. This is aimed at "preserving biodiversity and integrating communities into a harmonious development with Nature".

33. Also, protection of marine biodiversity has been the aim of the Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary, which covers France's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the Caribbean Sea. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and France's Protected Areas Agency have signed a "sister sanctuary" agreement to support the protection of endangered humpback whales that migrate more than 3,000 miles annually between the NOAA Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of Massachusetts and the Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary in French Antilles in the Caribbean. Both sanctuaries provide support for the same population of whales, which spend spring and summer in the rich feeding grounds of Stellwagen Bank before heading south to the warmer waters of the Caribbean Sea in order to mate and to give birth.

34. The GEF-funded and UNEP-implemented Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) project which focused on inland and coastal impacts on the marine environment concluded in 2011 after implementation of 16 successful pilot projects. A follow-on project to carry forward this work is being planned. The GEF-funded Gulf of Honduras project, which involves Honduras, Guatemala and Belize, seeks to maintain and improve the security and efficiency of international maritime operations and to prevent marine contamination caused by ships, as well as that caused by illegal discharges in terrestrial sources which are highly dangerous and toxic to animal and human life and to the health of marine coastal ecosystems.

35. In 2011, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) completed a study on the benefits and costs of investing in municipal waste management systems in the Caribbean. The study examined two case countries, and found benefit-cost ratios of roughly 10:1 for one country in which municipal waste management systems were developed with special emphasis on the management of ship-generated wastes. The benefits were noted to be high given the high dependence of this country on the coastal and marine resources for the

development of the tourism sector. This study serves to inform further policymaking towards the goal of assisting Caribbean countries in their efforts to protect the Caribbean Sea from degradation.

36. Despite limited progress with the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission owing to a lack of funds, there is a growing recognition of its key potential role as a regional ocean governance body. Increasingly, projects and programmes are being developed to support this role. The expectation is that the activities of the Commission will complement those of the many organizations involved in the sustainable management of oceans in the wider Caribbean region, by serving as a regional policy body that integrates the work of these existing bodies.

Disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery (paras. 13-15)

37. Natural disasters continue to have significant social and economic impacts in Association of Caribbean States countries. The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, is a focal organization with regard to disaster management. Its activities include: the conduct of post-disaster assessments; capacity-building activities in addressing disasters; and the preparation of technical information on disasters.

38. Enabling the fulfilment of an agenda in the Caribbean requires a number of actions, including formal recognition by Governments and ministries of education of the importance and urgency of including disaster risk reduction as a priority in the development policy of these ministries. Another priority is the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in school curricula, either through infusion or through stand-alone courses. The scaling up of disaster risk reduction knowledge management, particularly research, to support decision-making is yet another area that requires attention, since knowledge about disaster risk reduction, as both the natural and a social phenomenon, is rapidly expanding.

39. ECLAC conducted economic assessments of the impact of climate change on key vulnerable sectors of several Caribbean countries projected to 2050. Of particular importance to the resolution is the analysis of the coastal and marine sector in the British Virgin Islands and Saint Kitts and Nevis. These assessments provided quantitative information on the costs of the impact of climate change and also attached a monetary value to the various adaptation and mitigation options that were put forward. This information is important in informing strategies to reduce energy use and therefore carbon dioxide emissions, which are particularly harmful to marine species, specifically coral reefs.

Development of human resource capacity (para. 16)

40. There is a full spectrum of initiatives in the wider Caribbean region that contribute to building capacity for sustainable development at many levels, from the local to the regional. These include training for persons from community-based organizations, national Governments and regional organizations. This training takes the form of short courses as well as long-term programmes leading to certification. Capacity-building is offered by non-governmental organizations, Governments, tertiary-level institutions and regional organizations throughout the region, often in partnership with extraregional partners and donors. Some regional examples of short-term training include: training of trainers for marine protected area

management offered by the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network (CaMPAM); capacity-building under the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Fish II Programme; and Socioeconomic Monitoring through Caribbean Challenge MPA Managers training (a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation-funded project). Training offered by IMO is described above.

41. A key point regarding building capacity for regional ocean governance is that it is a multifaceted endeavour. The networking approach that is being developed for the operation of the Caribbean States Commission is designed to facilitate such an approach to capacity-building. While training is an essential aspect, capacity-building goes far beyond training. Much of the learning that needs to be acquired for ocean governance will be best acquired in "learning by doing" mode. Based on the Commission model, partners learn while carrying out joint implementation and capacity-building. This builds adaptive capacity and resilience. Therefore, what is critically needed to make progress based on this comprehensive view of building capacity, is support for moving forward with the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission.

Legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development (para. 18)

42. The financial implications for the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission must be considered at two levels: (a) the operation of the Secretariat and (b) strengthening capacity of ACS member countries and partner organizations to play their role in coastal and ocean governance, as conceived at the expert consultation. A preliminary estimate of the cost of establishing and operating the Secretariat for the first four-year phase, where the focus would be on living marine resources only, is in the order of US$ 1.5 million. This is a minimum estimate of the funds required to get started.

43. The cost implications of strengthening the capacity of ACS member countries and partner organizations to play their role in coastal and ocean governance are far-reaching in terms of acquisition of data and information, analysis and provision of advice and implementation of decisions. However, the Caribbean Sea Commission is not conceived as being responsible for implementing these activities. As emphasized at the expert consultation, implementation would be largely the responsibility of partner organizations. The role of the Commission would lie in coordination and cross-cutting integration. Its role could extend to identifying needs at a regional level and facilitating access to funding by organizations. It would effect a networking of organizations when their interaction could add value to their individual activities. As such, the Commission is conceived of as remaining a small and lean entity with a very specific integrating role at the regional policy level.

44. One important financial aspect of this resolution is the need for a full appreciation of the value of coastal and ocean resources of the wider Caribbean region, in terms of both their use value and their non-use value, which supports tourism and the recreational and cultural activities of local populations. Understanding and accounting for this value are seen as an important component in respect of the elaborating of financial implications. A review of this work in the region carried out by the CLME project indicates that most work has been directed towards coral reefs, especially the benefits of marine protected areas, but that little

effort has been focused on the value of coral reefs as coastal defence. The value of other ecosystems (continental shelf, pelagic) has received little or no attention.

45. Work on defining the legal implications of the resolution is expected to be taken up once the Secretariat is established and the Legal Subcommission becomes fully active.